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1959-01-22, Bette to Parents

Bette J. Barto

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Subject Terms

Women and the military, Women and war, United States -- Air Force, United States -- Army -- Air Forces, Photographs, Armed Forces -- Correspondence, Correspondence -- Vietnam War -- 1961-1975, Christmas

Summary

This collection contains 139 correspondence from Maj. Bette J. Barto, USAFE to her parents while serving as a nurse during the late 1950s and 1960s. Also included are three photographs, one special orders document, and one marriage license. In several cases, Bette refers to her parents as "Lizzie" and "Hugh Elmer," or simply "Elmer." Three letters from 1961 or 1962 are undated and placed in a separate folder.

Keywords

1959-01-22, Birthday

Identifier

2017-219-w-r-_Barto_ColdWar_1959-01-22

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Capt. Bette J Harris
7272 USAF HOSP.
USAFE
APO 231
NY, NY.



Airmail

Mr. & Mrs. H. E. Harris
1717 Highland Avenue
Knoxville 16,
Tennessee

127




CHARLESTON AIR FORCE BASE



1608th AIR TRANSPORT WING

From our
Box
Lunches
on
plane



6⁰⁰ am - Thursday
First Stark Day
22 Jan. 59

Happy Birthday To me.

I'm dressed for my first day among the Arabs and I'm in no rush to go. As yet I'm not sure of the floor. I'll be assigned to because the Chief Nurse is trying to shove me into Charge nurse on obstetrics and I'm just as definite about not going there. This morning the battle begins and I win the little first round; I'm starting on the surgical unit. I work 3 days 7-3 and then have Sun + Mon off and go on 3-11 Tues for 4 or 5 days then back on 7-3 a couple then probably 11-7 - Nice, eh? Polly was right - this old gal is peculiar!

I will write tonight about my trip - so far I haven't had 10 minutes to start the tale. I spent most of yesterday getting my records spread about in the right places.

11:30 pm
 Same Night
 22 Jan 54


This is my first minute to sit down and write. The gang took me to town for my Birthday dinner and we have only been back long enough to set up uniforms for the am.

I sent you a Cablegram because the mail situation here is really terrible. The mail didn't even arrive at all yesterday and no one took any out from us either. The girls say its been this way since the airline strike.

I tell you a little of the many and varied things that have happened since I left last Tuesday:

I got out to the base at Charleston and got cleared for flight quite easily. We were way under my 100 # baggage allowance - only 89 # counting the little square one I carried. I was through by 11 am and had nothing to do till 4 pm; so I changed into my flight suit and gave them my luggage, after I locked up my Overcoat & little bag in a locker, and I walked clear across base to the Officer's Club where I sat & talked with some pilots until I was hungry (I'd had breakfast at 9:30 in town)

I got back to the Terminal about 3pm only to find that our flight was delayed for the arrival of the President of Argentina - by plane - to visit Ike + ask for money. Ike sent the "Columbine" down to meet him, and it was the prettiest silver thing you've ever seen. There were hundreds of high ranking Army, Air force, Navy + Marine and Diplomatic Officials all lined up to greet El Presidente. There must have been 50-75 military police, 50 Reg. Police + highway patrol, plus all of the waiting officers + enlisted persons at the Terminal. It was quite an impressive show - a black Cadillac limousine, motorcade to take the Pres + his wife and aides up to town to spend the night before boarding Ike's plane for Washington. This delayed our take-off until 5pm - We finally loaded up - 87 of us - I was the only female officer and there were only 2 male officers besides the crew - the rest were enlisted Army + Air force boys + families. We had 35 small babies - none older than 5-6 - (18 bottle fed children) There were two flight



Attendants - (enlisted men) who fed us and warmed baby bottles. He had box lunches which were very good - but cold - next month they are to start serving hot food like commercial airlines. Everyone was nice to me. I got a good seat up behind the cockpit and the Captain who flew us came back after we were off the ground (plane was on autopilot and the co pilot was standing by, Mom) and invited me to come up front when I wanted to; so I went up for 2 hours when the co pilot was sleeping and helped fly the big monster. We got to the Islands (The Azores) at 2:00 am our time and landed + were fed breakfast (it was 6 am their time) then we changed crews and flew all that day arriving at Tripoli at 4 pm our time (and 9:30 pm Tripoli time) (22 1/2 hours total - much better than Pelly 35 hours).

Polly was on 3-11; so the other girls met me, got my luggage, and brought me to the quarters + fed me hot fried chicken + we talked until 4 am after Polly got here.

(over)

In rush - I have to work 7-3
tomorrow so I'll stop & write
again - taking up where I've
left off here -

Take care of yourself
and write when you can.

Love you

Bette

Boy am I glad I sold that
car!! But I think I'll buy
a bicycle. - everyone has
one who doesn't have a car!

Jan 59